

Bringing Unity, Integrity and Legitimacy to Democracy (BUILD)



Citizens in Somaliland gathered outside a polling station with their new ID cards.

Funding Level:

\$29 million

Duration:

March 2016 – March 2021

Activity Goal:

- Increased participation and trust in political processes among citizens
- Increased engagement of electoral stakeholders, including EMBs, government agencies, political parties, and media, and greater integrity, accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in electoral processes throughout the electoral cycle
- More engaged CSOs on constitutional and legislative processes pertaining to elections
- More inclusivity of clans, women, youth, and other marginalized groups in the electoral process

Activity Accomplishments:

- Advised the federal National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) on political party registration

OVERVIEW

While Somalia is moving towards more inclusive institutions and systems, most citizens have never participated in a direct election. In February 2016 Somalis conducted an indirect electoral process where 14,000 delegates voted for MPs, and they in turn voted in a new president. The federal government of Somalia (FGS) has committed to one-person-one-vote elections in Somalia in 2020 and is in the process of reviewing its provisional constitution that may lead to a constitutional referendum to ratify the finalized document.

Somaliland has been conducting direct elections since 2002. However, the current cycle of elections was delayed multiple times. On November 13, 2017, Somaliland held a presidential election that was considered credible and well-organized by observers. This election was a step forward in multiple ways, including its expansion of direct polling to districts where it had not been undertaken before, and the use of cutting-edge technology to develop a clean voter registry.

Bringing Unity, Integrity and Legitimacy to Democracy (BUILD) aims to support electoral and political processes across Somalia by fostering increased citizen participation; building the capacity of election management bodies (EMBs) and other relevant government bodies to administer credible elections; and supporting the development of issue-based and viable political parties.

ACTIVITY AREAS

BUILD works with a range of Somali institutions and organizations to incrementally increase awareness of civic rights and responsibilities, while establishing and strengthening key political structures to facilitate and support citizen participation.

Specifically, BUILD: 1) Encourages citizen participation in political and electoral processes through building civil society organizations' capacity to inform citizens and monitor elections and political processes; 2) Improves media capacity to cover and disseminate information on these processes; 3) Develops the capacity of Election Monitoring Bodies (EMBs) and other relevant government bodies to administer credible elections and political processes; and 4) Supports political parties to become more competitive, inclusive and representative of citizens' interests.

BUILD issues small grants to local organizations in order to strengthen and expand existing civil society networks and support

- legal requirements and procedures
- Provided the NIEC with expert technical assistance on electoral systems and organization of electoral management in federal systems
- Provided technical assistance to the Somaliland National Election Commission (NEC) on budgeting, operational planning, procurement, voter education and outreach, training, and results management
- Supported the NEC with procurement of voter ID card printers and supplies, ballots, polling booths, ballot boxes and other essential materials
- Provided training to all party polling agents in advance of the Somaliland presidential election
- Supported a select committee of civil society representatives to draft an information source book on civic and voter education messaging for Somalia

Activity Locations:

Somalia countrywide

Implementing Partner:

Creative Associates International

Key Partners:

Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA)
Forcier Consulting
International Republican Institute (IRI)

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voter education and outreach to citizens on key political processes, including the constitutional review. It also provides technical advice to EMBs in order to organize elections; conducts political skills training programs for political parties; and also trains political party agents to monitor elections.

ACTIVITY IMPACT

In Somalia BUILD will continue to lay the groundwork for supporting the planned 2020 one-person, one-vote elections by supporting the National Independent Election Commission (NIEC) to fulfill their mandate. BUILD is supporting the NIEC on strategic planning, operational management and knowledge management. They also provided expertise on the development of electoral systems and management of electoral processes in federal systems via workshops for the NIEC and other key stakeholders.

BUILD will also work to support political associations in understanding the requirements to register as political parties, a brand new process in Somalia. To support civic education in Somalia, BUILD is currently training youth groups on key principles of good governance, democracy and federalism.

In the lead up to the Somaliland presidential elections in November 2017, BUILD provided technical assistance to the National Elections Commission (NEC), along with equipment to improve the electoral process, including voter registration. With new printers and training on voter ID card production provided by BUILD, the NEC produced voter ID cards with personalized biographical information for 873,331 registered voters across Somaliland. These voter ID cards were designed to improve trust in the electoral process by preventing fraud.

To further support the electoral process, BUILD assisted the NEC in procuring 4,106 kg of ballots and related secure forms, along with cardboard polling booths, ballot boxes and polling kits. BUILD also supported the training of over 4,000 party poll watchers.